

*Issues Regarding Commanding Believers Today to “Take Dominion”*

The exhortation to Christians today to “*Take Dominion*” as part of their overall church mandate is usually **built on the foundation of a Postmillennial approach to eschatology**.

I will quote **R. C. Sproul**’s explanation of Postmillennialism:

“Postmillennialism is an **optimistic view of the future**, and how the world will end. Postmillennials believe that the great commission - make disciples of all nations - is actually going to be fulfilled; that **the nations** will overwhelmingly turn to Jesus before He returns.

When a postmillennial prays the Lord’s Prayer, there is the real expectation that the following line will come to pass before Christ returns: “*Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.*”

One early statement of this postmillennial view comes in the Savoy Declaration of 1658:

*‘In the latter days, antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the kingdom of his dear Son broken, the churches of Christ—being enlarged, and edified through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace—shall enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceable, and glorious condition than they have enjoyed.’*

This optimistic postmillennial view has been held by a number of theological heavyweights, including **John Owen**, **Jonathan Edwards**, and **Charles Hodge**.

**Good will gradually triumph over evil.** There won’t be a sudden 180, taking the world from overwhelmingly evil to overwhelmingly good, all in the moment of Christ’s return. Instead, across history, the kingdom of God has been growing, and it continues to grow even now, so that there will eventually be a glorious, extended period of time in which the rule of Christ will flourish on the earth. And **after that, the Lord will return.**”

<https://www.ligonier.org/podcasts/simply-put/postmillennialism>

Summary: Dominion Theology (or Kingdom Now Theology) claims that the kingdom is present in the church today and needs to be the positive influence of heaven permeating into society. The believer now has dominion over every area of life based on the victory Christ won at the cross and His installation as King. We have Christ’s kingdom authority right now and we are to reclaim all the institutions of society for Christ. So the parameters of the Great Commission of **Matthew 28** are expanded beyond the functions of evangelism and spiritual discipleship. Political and social activism can be advocated from this theological foundation. Essentially, Christ has called us to Christianize the nations in preparation for His return.

Why is it important to study and understand eschatology – particularly the different millennial views:

“Premillennialism, Amillennialism, and Postmillennialism look at these [future prophesied] events differently and come to very different conclusions. So . . . we dare not follow the lead of some who would dismiss this matter as too complicated or as having no real importance.

First, it is important because our worldview is significantly colored by the millennial view we embrace. Believers who are quite serious about their Christian lives will discover that their millennial view does affect their approach to life. Is the millennial kingdom present now? Do we bring in the kingdom by advancing the gospel throughout the world? Is the millennial kingdom a future thing? How we answer these and other questions definitely affects our personal worldview.

Second, eschatological study is important because of the great amount of prophetic Scripture that is devoted to this area. The kingdom where the Messiah rules is no minor matter to the writers of Scripture.

Third, it is important because God’s purposes on this earth will be fully realized in the millennial kingdom. The issue of the fulfillment of the biblical covenants comes into focus at this point.” [Paul N. Benware – *Understanding End Times Prophecy*]

Premillennialism is based on the normal sense of the text from **Revelation 20** which designates a 1000 year period (after the glorious return of Christ to defeat His enemies) during which Satan is bound and Christ reigns on the earth with His saints. The specific length of this period is labeled six times in the chapter as a millennium.

## **I. DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE UNIVERSAL KINGDOM AND THE MEDIATORIAL KINGDOM**

### **A. Definitions**

#### 1. Universal Kingdom

**James Orr**: There is therefore recognized in Scripture . . . a natural and universal kingdom or dominion of God, embracing all objects, persons, and events, all doings of individuals and nations, all operations and changes of nature and history, absolutely without exception . . .”

This kingdom exists without interruption throughout all time.

#### 2. Mediatorial Kingdom

**McClain**: “The Mediatorial Kingdom may be defined tentatively as:

- a) the rule of God through a divinely chosen representative who not only speaks and acts for God but also represents the people before God;
- b) a rule which has **especial reference to the earth**; and
- c) having as its mediatorial ruler one who is always a member of the human race.”

Christ serves this role in His function as Prophet, Priest, and King.

## **B. Confusion When Distinction Not Maintained**

- You must be clear which aspect of God's Kingdom a specific passage is referencing. Just because reference is made to Christ's authority and throne, you cannot assume that the Mediatorial Kingdom is in view.
- You must be clear whether the passage is speaking from the perspective of past history or from that of predictive prophecy oriented towards the future.

**C. Both the Abrahamic and Davidic covenants are unconditional and God's promises must be taken seriously.** God goes out of His way to explain that there is nothing that Israel can do in terms of failure or rebellion or rejection or sin to alter His commitment to fulfill the promises to the nation of a king and a kingdom based in the physical land that will bring blessing to all the nations. Thus there is an ongoing distinction between the elect nation of Israel and the other Gentile nations that will be saved and participate in New Covenant blessings.

(Ps. 94:14)

(Ps. 89:30-37 cf. Deut. 30:1-5)

Cf. Jer. 30-31; 33:17, 20-21; Mal. 3:6 – We could multiply passages on this topic of God's faithfulness to His promises to the nation of Israel. If God intended to set aside Israel and replace the nation with the church as a new people of God, these passages would lose their meaning.

### **John MacArthur on Romans 11:1-2a – Has God Cancelled His Promises to Israel?**

“Now, the question of God keeping those promises is a bigger question than just dispensational debate. The question of God keeping those promises is a question of divine integrity because if God has obviated, cancelled, changed His promises to Israel, we're all in a lot of trouble because we have a God who can't be trusted and who may as readily change His promises to us as He did to them. Now that's the bottom line consideration in understanding what's before us in this chapter.”

<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/45-82/has-god-cancelled-his-promises-to-israel-part-1>

**D. The interpretation of biblical prophecy** must follow the guidelines of “**normal**” (mistakenly characterized as “*literal*” by many) **hermeneutics** (which allows for the use of symbolism, types, etc.) rather than a mystical or allegorical or spiritualizing approach. Look at how the details of prophecies relating to the first coming of Christ were fulfilled literally. We should not expect to water down the prophecies relating to His second coming by adopting a difficult-to-pin-down mystical rendering that is very subjective. I have published a premill analysis of all of the OT prophetic books ([www.bibleoutlines.com](http://www.bibleoutlines.com)). I cannot imagine how a postmill commentator would handle all of those details without a lot of very subjective mystical speculation. I think there is a tendency to just avoid many of those passages rather than trying to wrestle with the details.

### E. R. Craven:

“No terms could have been chosen more unfit to designate the two great schools of prophetic exegesis than *literal* and *spiritual*. These terms are not antithetical, nor are they in any proper sense significant of the peculiarities of the respective systems they are employed to characterize. They are positively misleading and confusing. *Literal* is opposed not to *spiritual* but to *figurative*; *spiritual* is in antithesis on the one hand to *material*, on the other to *carnal* (in a bad sense). The *Literalist* (so called) is not one who denies that *figurative* language, that *symbols*, are used in prophecy, nor does he deny that great *spiritual* truths are set forth therein; his position is, simply, that the prophecies are to be *normally* interpreted (i.e. according to the received laws of language) as any other utterances are interpreted – that which is manifestly *literal* being regarded as *literal*, that which is manifestly *figurative* being so regarded. The position of the *Spiritualist* (so called) is not that which is properly indicated by the term. He is one who holds that whilst certain portions of the prophecies are to be *normally* interpreted, other portions are to be regarded as having a *mystical* (i.e. involving some secret meaning) sense. Thus, for instance, *Spiritualists* (so called) do not deny that when the Messiah is spoken of as ‘*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*,’ the prophecy is to be *normally* interpreted; they affirm, however, that when He is spoken of as coming ‘*in the clouds of heaven*’ the language is to be ‘*spiritually*’ (*mystically*) interpreted . . . . The terms properly expressive of the schools are **normal** and **mystical**.

E. The millennial kingdom on earth is the expected time of **restoration** that corresponds to God’s creation which was marred by the Fall but Redeemed by Christ’s work on the cross. This millennial period must be distinguished from God’s eternal reign in heaven which will eventually be manifested in the new heavens and new earth. Sometimes the OT telescopes these two periods rather than maintaining a clear distinction.

## II. ANALYSIS OF THE COMMAND TO TAKE DOMINION

### A. Pre Fall Issuing of the Command

(Gen. 1:26-28)

#### What does it mean that God gave humanity dominion over the animals?

The word *dominion* means “rule or power over.” God has sovereign power over His creation and has delegated the authority to mankind to have dominion over the animals (**Genesis 1:26**). David reinforces this truth: “*You made [mankind] rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet*” (**Psalms 8:6**). Humanity was to “*subdue*” the earth (**Genesis 1:28**)—we were to hold a position of command over it; we were placed in a superior role and were to exercise control over the earth and its flora and fauna. Mankind was set up as the ruler of this world. All else was subjugated to him.

God's command to subdue the earth and the animal life in it is a command to have the mastery over all of it. A true mastery (of anything) cannot be accomplished without an understanding of the thing mastered. In order for a musician to master the violin, he or she must truly understand the instrument. In order for mankind to attain mastery over the animal kingdom, we must understand the animals.

With the authority to rule comes the responsibility to rule well. There is an inherent accountability in the command to subdue the earth. Man has a duty to exercise his dominion under the authority of the One who delegated it. All authority is of God (**Romans 13:1-5**), and He delegates it to whomever He will (**Daniel 4:17**). The word subdue doesn't have to imply violence or mistreatment. It can mean "to bring under cultivation."

Man is to be the steward of the earth; he is to bring the material world and all of its varied elements into the service of God and the good of mankind. The command to subdue the earth is actually part of God's blessing on mankind. Created in the image of God, Adam and Eve were to use the earth's vast resources in the service of both God and themselves. It would only make sense for God to decree this, since only humans were created in God's image.

<https://www.gotquestions.org/dominion-over-animals.html>

**Dr. Roland Chia:** <https://ethosinstitute.sg/distortions-of-dominion-theology/>

In his article entitled 'Dominionism Rising' published on the Political Research site, **Frederick Clarkson** explains that 'Dominionism is the theocratic idea that regardless of theological camp, means, or timetable, God has called conservative Christians to exercise dominion over society by **taking control of political and cultural institutions**. The term describes a broad tendency across a wide swath of American Christianity.'

In his book *Kingdom Come: A Biblical Response to Dominion Theology*, **Don Pirozok** links DT to **Kingdom Now (KN)** theology. As its name suggests, KN teaches that it is the responsibility of the Church to expand the kingdom of God which Jesus Christ has inaugurated to the far reaches of the earth, to 'spread the glory of God by making the nations "Christian".' . . .

But most significantly, KN is governed by the **Dominion Mandate**, an expression coined by **Peter Wagner**. According to **Pirozok**, the Dominion Mandate is:

"... a directive based upon the God-given authority in **Genesis 1:25** which Adam lost in the fall. Today, God is raising up Christians who will walk in **restored authority** which Jesus Christ has recovered through the work of the cross. The restored dominion given to Christians will allow them to subdue the earth and rule over it. In the process of

taking the restored dominion, the Kingdom of Heaven can now be expanded over all the earth. The church is now expanding the kingdom, **converting the nations into Christian nations**, and will fill the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.”

**Check out this article** critiquing the **Seven Mountain Mandate Movement**:

Here are the seven “mountains” to be transformed, according to the seven mountain mandate: Education, Religion, Family, Business, Government/Military, Arts/Entertainment, Media

<https://www.gotquestions.org/seven-mountain-mandate.html>

Observations:

- This dominion extended to the animal kingdom and the works of God’s creation. At this point in history there were no human institutions in the various realms of government, economics, education, art, business, etc. to consider.
- When the command was given before the entrance of sin and death into the world, the animal kingdom and the environment were receptive to mankind’s mastery.
- At the Fall, mankind lost its ability to have complete mastery.
- Christ’s victory at the cross leads to the restored opportunity for dominion which will not be fully realized until the millennial kingdom. For example, if one were to try to exercise dominion today over lions and bears, it would not turn out well. The lion will not lie down with the lamb until the millennial kingdom has been established by Jesus Christ.
- Certainly believers ought to try to have a **positive impact** in whatever sphere they operate to the extent that God gives them opportunity. However, I do not believe that this is a strategy to **Christianize nations** in preparation for the return of Christ.

## **B. Great Commission Emphasis on Evangelism and Discipleship (Matt. 28:18-20)**

**Jefferson Kent Peterson:**

If the Great Commission is to be believed, we are not only sent to evangelize the nations, but to “*make disciples of all nations.. teaching them to obey all I have commanded you,*” (Matt. 28:18-20). The Commission calls for the **discipleship of nations** to the Law of God. So, if God’s Kingdom and eternal government is being expressed through the Church, then that implies that we, as the Church, should cause the whole earth to come under the Lordship (dominion) of Jesus Christ, that the laws of the State, of human governments, should eventually conform to the Law of God as an expression of that dominion. . .

The Dominionists believe that Christ will come after the Kingdom has been established on the earth through world wide dissemination, conversion, and discipleship by the Church. This general conformity to the Law of God by the nations will be part of a “common grace” that elicits the cooperation of even unbelievers. After an indeterminate by lengthy period (symbolized by the 1,000 years), Christ will come to bring history to an end and to destroy death and the devil completely.

<https://www.scholarscorner.com/dominion-theology-a-flaw-in-the-foundation/>

- This mission of evangelism will only see a **small measure of success** – not the resounding triumphal progression required by the postmill position.

- Parable of the Soils (**Matt. 13:1-23**). Three of the four types of soil represent unsaved individuals.
- The gate is narrow and the way is narrow leading to life.  
*"Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. 14 "For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it." (Matt. 7:13-14)*
- In evangelizing, we are a savor of life unto life or of death unto death.  
*"For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; 16 to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things? 17 For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God." (2 Cor. 2:15-17)*
- cf. The evangelism of the early church recorded in Acts. In each city we see only a small portion of a given city respond positively to the gospel message. There is no **Christianization of the culture**. The carrying out of the command to “*make disciples of all the nations*” refers to the increasing worldwide proclamation of the gospel which results in the conversion of God’s elect **individuals** from all different nations. But during this age there is **no national discipleship**. The OT promises regarding the nations coming under subjection to God’s law reference the millennial kingdom. [Which of course the postmill advocates would say could be occurring now – even though we don’t see evidence of that type of spiritual movement in the Book of Acts or the Epistles.]

- It is important that we don’t get distracted from what Christ intended to be the main focus of the Great Commission.

**C. Admission that This Present Age Does Not Yet Reflect the Total Physical Dominion of Christ**  
(Heb. 2:5-9)

**D. Dominion over Sin and Death Will Be the Point at Which the Total Physical Dominion of Christ Will Be a Reality**  
(1 Cor. 15:24-28)

### **III. CHARACTERIZATION OF THE MILLENNIAL KINGDOM**

[I have restricted my references to the prophet Isaiah. Similar passages could be exegeted from the other OT prophets. Please click on my blog hyperlinks for the **commentary notes** on each passage. I would be interested in comparing how a postmill commentator would interpret the details of these prophecies.]

- **Justice, Peace and Unity in the Messianic Kingdom**

<https://www.bibleoutlines.com/isaiah-111-10-justice-peace-and-unity-in-the-messianic-kingdom/> (Isa. 11:1-10)

- **3 Kingdom blessings that encourage believers as we eagerly anticipate the faithful fulfillment of God's Promises**

<https://www.bibleoutlines.com/isaiah-351-10-take-me-home-country-roads/>  
(Isa. 35:1-10)

- **The Light of the Lord will be reflected in transformed Israel, served by transformed nations in the millennial kingdom** [This posting includes a summary of the various eschatological viewpoints]

<https://www.bibleoutlines.com/isaiah-601-22-the-magnetic-draw-of-the-light-of-the-lord-in-the-millennial-kingdom/>  
(Isa. 60:1-22)

- **The Lord swears He will bring salvation and righteousness to His Holy City Jerusalem.**

<https://www.bibleoutlines.com/isaiah-621-12-jerusalem-a-city-not-forsaken/>  
(Isa. 62:1-12)

- **Rejoice in anticipation of God's new creation – Millennial Blessings**

<https://www.bibleoutlines.com/isaiah-6517-25-god-saves-the-best-for-last/>  
(Isa. 65:17-25)

- **Joy in God's kingdom on earth – the comfort only a mother can provide.**

<https://www.bibleoutlines.com/isaiah-667-14-joy-in-gods-kingdom-on-earth-the-comfort-only-a-mother-can-provide/>  
(Isa. 66:7-14)



**Summary of Millennial Conditions:**

<https://www.neverthirsty.org/bible-qa/qa-archives/question/earth-be-like-in-millennial-kingdom/>

## What the Earth Will Be Like in the Millennial Kingdom

| Characteristic                             | Passages   |
|--|--|
| Christ will rule over the earth.           | Daniel 2:44; Zechariah 14:9  |
| Christ will rule the world from Jerusalem. | Joel 3:17; Micah 4:1-2; Zechariah 14:9, 16-17                          |
| Highway of Holiness leads to Jerusalem.    | Isaiah 35:8-10   |
| Worldwide peace will exist.                | Isaiah 9:6-7; 32:18-20   |
| King will be a shepherd.                   | Ezekiel 34:23-25   |
| Peace will exist among the animals.        | Isaiah 11:6-7; 65:24-25  |
| Peace between animals and mankind.         | Isaiah 11:6, 8; Ezekiel 34:23-25, 28                                   |
| Earth filled with the knowledge of God.    | Isaiah 11:9  |
| Vegetation will flourish.                  | Isaiah 30:23-25; 35:1-7; Jeremiah 31:2-14; Joel 3:18; Ezekiel 34:26-27 |
| Believers will enjoy long lives.           | Isaiah 65:19-20,22   |
| Suffering cease for believers.             | Isaiah 29:18; 65:13-15, 23   |
| Unbelievers will be allowed to sin.        | Isaiah 66:24; Zechariah 14:16-19                                       |

### **IV. CHARACTERIZATION OF THIS PRESENT AGE AS EVIL AND OPPOSED TO GOD AND HIS PEOPLE**

- Described as the “*times of the Gentiles*” – **Tim Munger**:

Jesus spoke of the Times of the Gentiles in **Luke 21:24**, saying, “*And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.*”

The Times of the Gentiles began in 586 BC, with the Babylonian conquest of Jerusalem. King Nebuchadnezzar’s armies breached the city’s wall, destroyed the Temple and the city’s palaces, and took the tribes of Judah captive. While the Jewish people lived under his rule in Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, which Daniel both disclosed and interpreted for him of a great image that begins with a head of gold, chest and arms of silver, a belly of bronze, legs of iron, and feet of both iron and clay (**Daniel 2:24–45**). The image of Nebuchadnezzar’s

dream describes the beginning and ending of the Times of the Gentiles for Israel and the Jewish people.

Daniel directly interpreted the image's gold head as a symbol of Nebuchadnezzar himself and his empire. The chest and arms of silver, though "*inferior to*" Babylon (v. 39), would arise after that nation, meaning it must refer to Medo-Persia. The following kingdom, the belly and thighs of bronze, referred to Greece, while the fourth kingdom, having legs of iron, referred to Rome. The final nation, with feet of iron and clay, is the kingdom that will be struck by the stone, the Messiah Jesus. This stone will destroy the world's kingdoms to establish the heavenly Kingdom. Thus, the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream describes the beginning and ending of the Times of the Gentiles for Israel and the Jewish people.

**Deuteronomy 28:62–68** gives insight into this time period. This passage explains the punishment, or the chastening, the Jewish people would experience if they turned away from God. They would be removed from the land, scattered around the world, and would experience severe persecution, which all came to pass. The passage, however, does not tell how long the dispersion would last. Starting with the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in AD 70, the dispersion ultimately lasted nearly 2,000 years.

Though Israel regained the land in 1948 and regained control of Jerusalem in 1967, the Times of the Gentiles **continue to this day**. With international government agencies like the United Nations and nations like the United States having influence over the leaders and people of Israel, it's evident that we are still in the Times of the Gentiles.

At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, He will bring the Times of the Gentiles to their conclusion.

The Times will continue until an unknown date in the future when the rightful King, Jesus Christ, comes to redeem Israel and crush Israel's enemies (**Daniel 2:44; Zechariah 12:10–14; 13:1; 14:1–11**). At the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, He will bring the Times of the Gentiles to their conclusion: first, in crushing Israel's enemies, then at the judgment of the nations known as the sheep and goats judgment (**Matthew 25:31–46**). The litmus test at this time is their treatment of the Jewish people, whom Jesus calls My brethren; it involves blessing and cursing (**Genesis 12:3**). He will bless those who served the Jewish people. He will curse those who rejected and ignored the Jewish people, "*and these will go into everlasting punishment*" (**Matthew 25:46**).

<https://www.foi.org/2022/09/09/what-are-the-times-of-the-gentiles/>

- **Rom. 1:18-32** describes the downward spiral of God's abandonment of mankind due to their sinfulness and willful rejection of the truth. This is the pattern we tend to see

in the world around us in general, in nations and world kingdoms and in other human institutions. Things don't tend to progress and become more and more Christianized.

- Described as this present evil and perverse age – **Acts 2:40; Gal. 1:4; Eph. 5:16**

*“And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation!’” (Acts 2:40)*

*“who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father,” (Gal. 1:4)*

*“making the most of your time, because the days are evil.” (Eph. 5:16)*

*“For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, 12 instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, 13 looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.” (Tit. 2:11-14)*

- Described as the domain where Satan is presently exercising influence  
**(Eph. 2:2)**

- Promise of persecution and suffering and tribulation in this present world before Jesus returns to establish His kingdom of righteousness and peace

*“Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you;” (John 15:20)*

*“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world.” (Jn. 16:33)*

*“strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, ‘Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.’” (Acts 14:22)*

*“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” (Rom. 8:18-39 NAS)*

*“For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.” (2 Cor. 1:5-10; 4:7-12, 16-18; 11:21-29)*

*“so that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. 4 For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.” (1 Thess. 3:3-4)*

*“therefore, we ourselves speak proudly of you among the churches of God for your perseverance and faith in the midst of all your persecutions and afflictions which you endure. 5 This is a plain indication of God's righteous judgment so that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which indeed you are suffering.” (2 Thess. 1:4-5)*

**1 Peter** – much to say about submitting to unjust suffering

- We are instructed to take up our cross and follow Jesus in the path of servanthood and discipleship; not to ride forth on white horses as victorious conquerors as we take dominion in every realm of life. The cross is for the present age; the crown is for the future age.

- Moral conditions and the receptivity to the truth will get worse and deteriorate as the return of Christ approaches.

*“But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, 3 men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth.” (1 Tim. 4:1-3)*

*“But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; 5 holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. 6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, 7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2 Tim. 3:1-7; 4:3-4)*

**Millard Erickson:**

“Perhaps more damaging to postmillennialism is its apparent neglect of Scripture passages . . . that portray spiritual and moral conditions as worsening in the end times. It appears that postmillennialism has based its doctrine on very carefully selected Scripture passages.”

Summary: It should be obvious that the scriptural description of this present age does not mesh with the OT prophetic descriptions of the millennial kingdom [quoted above in Isaiah]. But it does mesh with our perception of reality around us. There is no empirical evidence that we are already in or even approaching any type of golden age. I guess that a postmill advocate could argue that the millennium has not yet begun. But that creates a different set of problems:

- What then is the significance of Christ being installed as king upon His resurrection and ascension and being seated on the throne at the right hand of the Father? Did that not begin the process where the church now is discipling the nations?
- When will the millennium begin and how can we tell when it has arrived/
- How long must the return of the Lord be pushed out?
- If we cannot perceive any progress in terms of the Christianization of the nations over these past 2000+ years, what is the basis for thinking that this will occur in the future?

## **V. ESTABLISHMENT OF MILLENNIAL KINGDOM BY THE SUDDEN, DRAMATIC INTERVENTION OF CHRIST – NOT BY THE GRADUAL AGENCY OF THE CHURCH**

- Divine kingdom established by climactic divine power. Often times in Scripture, due to the **telescoping effect of prophecy**, both the millennial kingdom and the eternal kingdom which follows are viewed together. [Just as both comings of Christ are often viewed together in OT prophecy.]

### **- How Will the Messianic Kingdom Come?**

“The answer of course is 'with a bang!' It will come with a bang. It will come suddenly and I should say, violently. Let's look at a great dream in the book of Daniel that speaks of how the Messianic Kingdom comes.

#### **Daniel 2:31-35**

#### **Daniel 2:44-45**

This prophetic dream doesn't give us a picture of Christianity slowly becoming greater, slowly influencing society and man's kingdom's slowly decreasing. No... It shows God smashing all earthly kingdoms in one event and at one time. He will destroy them to such an extent that they will be swept away without a trace! And a whole new order will be set up that is established over the entire earth... The kingdom of God! And note that it is a stone that smashes the other kingdoms. A rock or stone not cut out by human hands. **This is the Lord Jesus.**” <https://jesusplusnothing.com/series/post/TheMessianicKingdomP1>

[Note: The prophecy does not state that somehow God's people are destined to remake the fourth earthly kingdom as God's instrument to establish peace and righteousness on the earth. Instead, the Kingdom of God comes in dramatic fashion and smashes and replaces whatever earthly kingdom exists at that time. His kingdom, made with His hands, ends up filling the earth.]

- **Alva McClain:** “There is a current and popular idea that the coming of the Kingdom of God to earth is a process, long and gradual; at times so imperceptible that sceptics may

be able to dispute seriously whether there be such a thing as the reign of God. Such a notion has no foundation in the writings of the Old Testament prophets. Malachi declares the Lord of the Kingdom for whom Israel had long been waiting ‘*shall suddenly come to his temple,*’ to be a ‘*swift witness*’ against all who practice immorality, oppression, and false religion (**3:1-5**). Again, in **chapter 4**, the same prophet sees that day coming as a *fire* which quickly consumes the ‘*stubble*’ of the field; and the Lord of the harvest arrives as the ‘*Sun*’ rising in the morning (**vss. 1-2**). In that ‘*day of the Lord’s wrath,*’ there will be a ‘*speedy riddance*’ of all those in Jerusalem who, because of God’s long delay in openly manifesting His righteous rule upon earth, will be arguing that there never will be any such reign (cf. **Zep. 1:18** with **1:12**). In the case of those Gentile nations which have contemptuously scattered and afflicted the chosen nation of Israel, there will come divine retribution ‘*swiftly and speedily*’ (**Joel 3:1-4**).”

- The Apostolic early church viewed the establishment of the mediatorial kingdom on earth (based on the throne of David from the city of Jerusalem focused around the OT promises to the nation of Israel) as still future.  
(**Acts 1:6-8**)

This is a key passage in support of the premillennial position. Christ does not correct the disciples and say that the kingdom has already been established or that their understanding of the physical nature of the upcoming kingdom is wrong. He just exhorts them to focus on their mission at hand and leave the timing and establishment of the kingdom in the Lord’s hands.

- Notes on this **Acts 1** passage:

“Following His resurrection, Jesus spoke to them for 40 days about the kingdom of God. He also spoke to them about a time soon coming when they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Now there are lots of questions that the disciples could have asked. Especially concerning this gift of the Holy Spirit they were to receive. But there is only one recorded question in scripture. It is what still burned in their hearts... something they didn't understand. 'When does the kingdom get restored to Israel?' 'When does the Messianic Kingdom that all the prophets spoke about for Israel come about?'

Note well Jesus' answer. He doesn't say 'you guys have got it all wrong. You are way off track! That's gone. Israel rejected me so I have withdrawn the promise of the kingdom. The kingdom is now a spiritual kingdom within you.' No, Jesus didn't say that. He said that God the Father had set a time for the kingdom to come and to be restored to Israel but the time for that was not for His disciples to know. Their initial priority and focus should be on a different coming - the coming baptism in the Holy Spirit and the power they would receive to be Jesus' witnesses throughout the whole earth.”

<https://jesusplusnothing.com/series/post/TheMessianicKingdomP1>

- In **Rev. 5** we see that it is the Lord Jesus Himself, “*the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah,*” who will intervene in the last days to establish His kingdom and set up His redeemed people “*to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.*” This reign on the earth is viewed as **yet future**.

- It is a mistake to base a theological position (e.g. the gradual growth of the kingdom throughout church history) on the teaching of Jesus in a couple **parables** – The Mustard Seed and the Leaven -- **Matt. 13:31-35**.

## **VI. THE NATION ISRAEL REMAINS DISTINCT FROM THE CHURCH AND OT PROMISES MADE TO ISRAEL WILL BE FULFILLED IN THE FUTURE**

- **Replacement theology** which views the church as the new Israel and the focus for the fulfillment of many of the OT promises makes too much of the continuity of the people of God as children of Abraham by faith. You cannot extrapolate from points of correspondence between the nation of Israel and the church (e.g. the church participates in the blessings of the New Covenant, etc.) to eliminate the distinctiveness of the two groups. When Paul writes:

*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:28)*

He is not saying that the categories of male and female no longer exist.

- **1 Cor. 10:32** – Look at the distinction that the Apostle Paul makes between 3 distinct groups of people: unsaved Jews (who remain a category recognized by God), unsaved Gentiles and the believing church of God.

- **Rom. 9-11** – Shows how the rejection of the nation of Israel is only temporary; during this present age, Gentiles are being grafted into the people of God; but God will once again deal with Israel as a nation in the future and at some point in time all of Israel will be saved (**11:26**).

### **Alva McClain:**

“Attempts have been made, however, to deny the historical continuity of the Israel of the future Kingdom with the Israel of Old Testament history. Two hermeneutical schemes have been devised to implement this denial: first, certain of the Old Testament promises to Israel are treated as having been fulfilled in the historic return of the exiles from the Babylonian captivity; and second, those prophetic promises which cannot be thus handled are stripped down to a tenuous “spiritual” content and transferred to another “Israel” having no genuine nexus with the historical nation. Such attempts to eviscerate the promises of God to the Israel of history cannot be sustained in the face of the Biblical testimony. What are the facts?

First, all the prophets unite in a solemn warning that the people of Israel are to be punished for their sins, and that this punishment will involve defeat by their

enemies, the loss of their place in the promised land, and dispersal among all the Gentile nations. (**Deut. 28:63-65**) Here there can be no question as to identity – this is the Israel of Old Testament history.

Second, during this divinely imposed and world-wide dispersal of Israel, according to the prophets, there will be no absolute break in the historical continuity of the nation.

Third, the prophets promise specifically that there will be a restoration of the nation which was once cast off. (**Zech. 10:6; Jer. 31:28**).

Fourth, the prophets assert that the promised restoration of historic Israel will involve a regathering of the dispersed nation back into the land from which they were cast out.

Fifth, to this same historic nation of Israel, regathered from its world-wide dispersion, there will come a restoration of ancient privileges and rights. (**Mic. 4:7-8; Ezek. 36:11**)

Sixth, all this will come to pass in what the prophets call the last days. . . Since the phrase ‘*in the last days*,’ as used in the context of **Micah 4**, certainly refers to eschatological time, the prophecies of Israel’s restoration cannot be regarded as fulfilled by any **partial restorations** in the past.

Seventh, all the prophetic descriptions of historic Israel’s future restoration indicate that the restored relation to Jehovah’s favor will be something permanent, never again to be interrupted. (**Mic. 4:7; Is. 60:20**)

The **37<sup>th</sup> chapter of Ezekiel** may well be used to summarize the entire point under discussion . . . The Old Testament nation of Israel, historically ruptured and scattered among the nations, is the nation which in the prophets is again restored and reunited in the future Kingdom of God.”

- The importance to whether you believe God still has a program for the nation of Israel or whether the church of Jesus Christ has replaced Israel as the focus of OT prophecy bears extreme relevance today in the light of the recent Middle East crisis over the savage attack by Hamas on Israel. Does **Gen. 12:3** still apply today – that God will bless those that bless Abraham and his descendants and vice versa?

- **Ligonier Ministries** answer is “No -- the church has replaced Israel”  
<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/bless-israel#:~:text=So%2C%20the%20promise%20of%20Abraham,is%20still%20in%20force%20today.>
- **Ralph Drollinger**: He writes in support of the present day application to the Jews.  
<https://capmin.org/those-who-bless-israel-god-will-bless-those-who-curse-her-h-e-will-curse/>



- Just the historical reality that God has preserved both the nation of Israel and the city of Jerusalem is amazing. [Even though one could argue that the nation could disappear and then still be reconstituted again before the end times.] The point is that the historical continuity still exists to the OT promises to the nation of Israel.

## **VII. THE BOOK OF REVELATION CLEARLY TEACHES THAT THE MILLENNIUM AND THE BINDING OF SATAN FOLLOW THE RETURN OF CHRIST**

- Study **Rev 19-21**. One could argue that these chapters do not reflect any type of chronology and that somehow Satan is bound now in this present age . . . but those arguments are rather convoluted.

Dominion Theology tends to view the book of Revelation as already fulfilled – the **Preterist** view.

## **VIII. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THIS DOMINION THEOLOGY AND POSTMILLENNIAL APPROACH**

- The focus of the church will be redirected in some measure to more **secondary purposes** associated with **taking dominion** in various realms of the culture. Our focus must be on evangelism and discipleship (growth in Christlikeness as we follow our Master) as we see the pattern in the NT. Where do we see an emphasis on success in the business realm or Christianizing the political, educational, economic, art realms, etc.? This is not to say that Christians should not be salt and light in all these realms or that the transformational power of the gospel will not impact these realms in a positive way. But our expectation should not be to devote such resources with the goal of seeing these realms Christianized in preparation for the return of Christ.
- We set Christians up for discouragement and disillusionment or at best self-deception when their perception of reality around them does not measure up to the optimistic promises of postmillennialism. This is why that view of eschatology lost so many adherents when World Wars came on the scene.
- We place responsibility on the church for activity that can only be accomplished by the Lord Jesus Himself.
- The **return of Christ** (which must be after the millennium, and consequently after any events prophesied as leading up to the millennium – cf. **Matt. 24**, etc.) must therefore be pushed out beyond the conceivable lifetime of any present generation. Unless you take the position that the evil days in which we

currently live are somehow already the millennium – hard to correlate to the OT prophetic characterization of that period. [Even if one takes the “*one thousand year*” period as symbolic – it must be symbolic of some **long period of time.**] This nullifies the NT admonitions to be **watching** and to be **prepared** because the judge stands at the door and is coming back shortly.

*“He who testifies to these things says, “Yes, I am coming quickly.”  
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev. 22:20)*